



**Rachel Carson Reserve  
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
October 30 2014, 3p**

<b>LAC Members</b>	<b>Affiliation/Interest</b>	<b>Present</b>
Mr. Perry Barrow	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Charles Burgess	Town of Beaufort	No
Ms. Ann Carter	Community Member	Yes
Mr. John Fussell	Community Member	Yes
Ms. Margaret Garner	Community Member	Yes
Chief Steve Lewis	Beaufort Police Department	No
Mr. Randy Newman	Fort Macon State Park	No
Ms. Robin Newton	Reserve Volunteer	Yes
Dr. Dan Rittschof	Duke University Marine Lab	No
Mr. Stanley Rule	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Ben Wunderly	North Carolina Maritime Museum - Beaufort	Yes
<b>Others in Attendance</b>		
Paula Gillikin	DCM, Central Sites Manager	Yes
Rebecca Ellin	DCM, Reserve Manager	Yes
Brandon Puckett	DCM, Reserve Research Coordinator	Yes
Lori Davis	DCM, Reserve Education Coordinator	Yes
Whitney Jenkins	DCM, Reserve Coastal Training Program Coordinator	Yes
Scott Crocker	DCM, Reserve Northern Sites Manager	Yes
Chris Ellis	NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Meeting Facilitator	Yes

## **Focus Group Session for NCNERR Management Plan Update**

Chris Ellis facilitated a focus group session with Local Advisory Committee members as part of the NCNERR 2016-2021 management plan update process. A series of questions was provided to LAC members prior to the meeting and served as the basis for the focus group discussion, focusing on three primary areas: program management, coastal community involvement, and partnership opportunities. Specific topics discussed included: current environmental topics critical to the NCNERR; NCNERR program offerings and activities; visitor management concerns and opportunities; program priorities for the next five years; community awareness and connection to the Reserve; engagement of local communities; and partnership opportunities. The discussion allowed LAC members to provide input on the Reserve's activities and priorities. Input gathered from each of the LACs for the four sites within the NCNERR will be incorporated into strategic planning activities as the updated management plan is drafted.

## **Reserve-wide Update**

### **Welcome to New Research Coordinator**

- Dr. Brandon Puckett began work August 25 in our Beaufort office as the new Research Coordinator. Brandon has a BS in Environmental Science from NCSU, a Master's in Fisheries Science from University of Maryland, and a PhD in Marine Science from NCSU. He brings with him extensive knowledge and basic and applied research and monitoring experience in NC estuarine systems. His recent work includes a blend of field ecology, oceanography, and population modeling to assess the function of marine reserves and design of reserve networks, as well as developing decision-support tools for ecological restoration. Additionally, Brandon's demonstrated ability to work with stakeholders and transfer results to management and conservation topics make him an excellent addition to our team.
- Terms of some Local Advisory Committee members serving in community member seats are set to expire in December 2014. We have sent a request to the Secretary to extend these seats through December of 2015 for the sake of continuity as we work through the NCNERR Management Plan Update process. We will let members know as soon as this request is processed. If granted, current members would serve through 2015 and an application and appointment process would be undertaken during fall of 2015.

## **Site Update – New Business**

### **Education Activities Since Spring 2014**

- 167 members of the public participated in the Summer Public Field Trip Series
- 98 children participated in summer camps
- 281 people attended outreach field trips or presentations

### **Research Activities**

- Various permitted research projects are being carried out at the Reserve and are summarized in the following table.

East Carolina University	Impact of boat noise on oyster toadfish reproduction
East Carolina University	Juvenile shark habitat preferences
North Carolina State University	Soundscape ecology study
University of California - Berkeley	Burrowing biomechanics of ghost crab
University of North Carolina	Landscape connectivity of oyster reefs and salt marshes
University of North Carolina	Oyster reef predation experiment

### Stewardship Activities

- In June, the Reserve in partnership with the NC Coastal Federation and Dr. Carolyn Currin, NOAA Beaufort Lab, planted 3,500 marsh grass plugs on the southeast side of Carrot Island. The primary purpose of this restoration was to stabilize sediments behind the oyster sill shore stabilization structure.
- Although Equine Encephalitis has been detected in Carteret County, the Reserve horse herd has not been affected. There are currently 33 horses on the site. Birth control vaccines will be delivered to select mares during the winter.
- The Reserve coordinated a multi-agency clean-up effort in honor of National Estuaries Day and National Public Lands Day. Sponsoring organizations included the Reserve, Town of Beaufort, and National Park Service. Partner organizations were NC Coastal Federation, Outsiders Bicycle Club, and Sierra Club-Croatan. Sixty-four volunteers donated 87 hours of time and removed more than 800 pounds of debris from Beaufort, the Rachel Carson Reserve, and Shackleford Banks.
- Various bird surveys were conducted through the summer and fall seasons, including International Shorebird Surveys conducted by John Fussell. In addition to contributing valuable conservation data to researchers by reporting species and numbers of birds, recent monitoring has given us the opportunity to report important data from individual banded birds such as piping plovers and great egrets.
- Thirty-two conservation professionals, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates studying marine biology and policy with the Duke University Marine Lab's Marine Conservation Summer Institute brought a global perspective to a local priority at the Rachel Carson Reserve this July as they helped develop rapid detection protocols for invasive species found at the Reserve.

### Public Comments

- None

### Action Items

- Paula will contact committee members in January 2015 to schedule a spring meeting to review the draft strategic plan.